



JUMP SHOT

Newsletter

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

The 15 % participation increase in Maryland District AAU basketball in 2010 was the result of aggressive recruitment, the returning of organizations that formerly participated with AAU, and the interest of organizations new to AAU. Increased participation in the District had a direct correlation on an increase in the number of teams attending national competition. Twenty DI, eighteen DII, twenty-five DIII and thirteen showcase teams, totaling 76 teams, attended the nationals representing Maryland.

Maryland teams certainly did their share of contributing to the economies of cities that hosted the nationals (Hampton, Virginia, Little Rock, Arkansas, Memphis Tennessee, Lexington, Kentucky, and Coco Beach, Florida). Restaurants experienced increased patronage, hotels filled their rooms with players, coaches, parents, relatives and supporters, automobile rentals flourished, and shopping malls attracted bargain seekers. In Hampton, Virginia, where I served as Commissioner of the 12U DI, 13U, 14U and 15U DIII, attendance was high with teams and supporters from as far away as Arizona and Puerto Rico.

Maryland teams did their organizations and the District proud. First by providing a myriad of lasting experiences to the kids and secondly by bringing home winning trophies and national placements. Mt. Royal/Baltimore Nike Elite's 16U posted a championship in the Super Showcase, 10U Banneker Kings earned a 2nd place finish and the Howard County Youth Program (HCYP) finished 3rd. A championship, a 2nd and a 3rd place finish are major accomplishments.

While I have singled out a few teams for their

accomplishments in 2010, I congratulate all of our teams; their coaches for their volunteerism and dedication to excellence; parents for their commitment to their son's growth and development in basketball; relatives and friends for their staunch support, and organizations for their confidence in AAU to provide an organized, competitive and quality basketball program.

Thank you for permitting Maryland AAU to serve you.



Benjamin DuBose
Director, Boys Basketball

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Mt. Royal Baltimore Nike Elite Wins Super Showcase



**Baltimore Nike Elite
National Showcase Champions**

Located in the upscale community of Bolton Hill, the Mt. Royal Recreation Center has long been home of elite teams. A major contributing factor to the Mt. Royal success is Coach Darrell Corbett. A mild mannered man and a teaching coach who doesn't abide any hollering or screaming, Corbett rests on the philosophy that attitude reflects leadership. Corbett says, "If a coaches' attitude is screwed up, so is his team" Darrell began coaching in 1986 at age 18 for Mt. Royal. He began entering teams in AAU in 1992.

Armed with a balanced team including 3 players, Daquan Cook, Jamil Artis and Isaiah Miles, who were ranked in the top 25 in the nation, Corbett took his 16U team to the Maryland District Championships where they defeated Team Melo to capture the Championship. Winning the District Championship earned the team an automatic bid to Orlando, Florida to participate in the Division I National Championships. In addition, the team was invited to participate in the Super Showcase where elite teams from across the country are invited to play and college coaches from some of basketball's best programs scout players. The team chose to attend the Super Showcase, which was held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports complex in Orlando, Florida. The Showcase held a particular significance to Darrell because his team won the Super Showcase and the National Championship in 2005. The team chose to participate in the 2010 Super Showcase only due to a funding shortage.

But first the team needed to keep their skills, timing and cohesiveness sharp by playing against stiff competition. Coaches Corbett, Carroll Mitchell, Jerrod Rucker, Mike Smelkinson and Ronald Dent took the team to Hampton, Virginia to play in the Boo Williams Tournament where they won the Silver Bracket. They moved on to Chantilly, Virginia where they made the final four in the Team Takeover Tournament. They returned to Chantilly, Virginia where they earned Super 8 honors in their own Baltimore Nike Elite Tournament. "These guys played as a unit, unselfishly and with a purpose; to win," says Coach Corbett. But before the Showcase was held, unexpectedly and tragically, the team was dealt a horrible blow, one that devastated the team and the family that it had become. John Crowder, the team's 6'8" Center had a month earlier moved from Baltimore County back to Baltimore City. The Mt. Carmel High School junior was gunned down in front of his grandmother's house in a senseless and cowardly act of violence. The unsolved murder left the team angry and saddened, but resolute that they were not going to the Super Showcase just to play. They were going to win it all for John.

The team of Daquan Cook, Charles Tapper, Isaiah Miles, Kayel Locke, Jamel Artis, Davon Vennie, Julian Davis, Keonte Potts, Ronald Scott and Lebrent Walker played 9 games in the Super Showcase and at each game John's number 15 jersey was placed over a vacant chair to honor John. In game 6, Mt. Royal was up by two when the EAM Daniel's All Stars tied the game. With precious seconds ticking away, Mt. Royal shot a jumper that missed, but Isaiah Miles took the rebound and lofted a 15 foot jump shot that hit all net for the win. The team attributed their win to John. In the finals, Mt. Royal defeated All Ohio Red by a score of 58-57 to capture the Super Showcase title.

"If this team stays together, they could be among the top 5 teams to have ever played in the Mt. Royal Program", says Coach Corbett.

Second Place Banneker Kings Is a First



Banneker Kings Coaches & Team

In three years of writing Jump Shot, this is the most unusual team that I have ever covered. There is always a story behind the story, but the Banneker King's 10U team's back story blew the barn door off of the lead story. Not only is this a skilled team, it is, to my knowledge, the smartest group of 4th graders to ever play on the same team.

When I began interviewing Coach Jarvis Thomas, Jr. about his Catonsville based organization's second place finish at the Division II National Championships, he began by talking about his team finishing third in the District Championships and not placing at all at the Nationals in 2009. Upon returning home, Coach Thomas held a meeting with his team and parents to explain the commitment necessary to win in 2010. He instituted practicing three to four times a week from 6-8 p.m. Players, who played multiple sports, dedicated themselves to basketball only. Parents supported the aggressive schedule, but still held their boys accountable for maintaining their high academic standards. When asked to elaborate on the academic success of his players, Coach Thomas said, "all of my boys are honor roll students." What Coach Thomas revealed couldn't be scripted and is the most unusual mixture of physical skill and intelligence.

Guard Seth Jones practiced three to four days per week, attended cello lessons and maintained straight A's at the Midtown Academy. He was selected to speak at the Baltimore City School System's Annual Back to School Banquet, which is spearheaded by CEO Andres Alonso.

Guard Juda Jordan is home schooled and maintains a 9th grade mathematics level and a 7th grade reading comprehension level. He relaxes between games and when traveling by reading. Guard Tyree Myers is an honor roll student who attends St. Paul School for Boys. Guard James Bishop is an honor roll student at Scott's Branch Elementary School. Guard Omari Watson, who led the team in scoring with 22 points in the first game of the National Tournament, is an honor roll student who attends Loyola Blakefield. Power forward Jaden Martin is a straight A student at Our Lady of Victory School. "His basketball IQ is phenomenal," says Coach Thomas." He calls the right play for the right situation. Small forward Shawn Henderson is an honor roll student at Our Lady of Victory School. Guard Shawn Betts is an honor roll student at Deer Park Middle School. Forward Reginald Sutton III is an honor roll student at Church Lane Elementary School. Five foot eight inch Center Paul Mustipher is an honor roll student at Reisterstown Elementary School. Center Jalen Smith is an honor roll student at Featherbed Lane Elementary School. At 5'9", Jalen has the most potential of all players.

After defeating the Riverside Hawks 31-30, the California team that was favored to capture the 10U title, the Kings fell to the Texas Celtics 26-17 in the title game.

Jarvis Thomas has been coaching for 9 years. After returning home from college with a back injury that ended his hopes of a career in professional football, Jarvis began coaching football for the Banneker Kings organization. At the end of the season his players wanted to play basketball and Jarvis volunteered to coach them. He has been coaching basketball ever since. The Banneker Kings began playing AAU in 2009 with 3 teams. The organization grew to 7 teams by 2010 with age groups 8U through 13U.

The success of the 10U Banneker Kings on and off the court is consistent with Coach Thomas's philosophy. He says, "You reap successful outcomes from putting in hard work. Winning is not about the size of the team. It is about who works the hardest."

HCYP Elite Takes Staying Together to New Level



HCYP Coaches & Team

Critics on one side of the isle line-up behind finding fresh star talent to make their team's nucleus better. Critics on the other side of the isle debunk the idea that a team needs a super talent to win. They prefer nurturing the talents of their current players and watching the consistent growth of the same team playing together year after year. Howard County Youth Program (HCYP) coach Bill Napalitano has kept the majority of his team together since they were in fourth grade. Eleven of his thirteen players are now high school seniors, with one junior and one graduate. "None of our guys play selfish ball. They play as a team. A couple of guys could score 25 points per game, but may score only 2. Some guys play 5 minutes in one game and thirty minutes in another," says Coach Napalitano.

AAU's Director of Boy's Basketball Ben DuBose says Coach Napalitano's coaching style is a cross between Duke's Mike Krzyzewski and UCLA's legendary John Wooden. Coach Napalitano modestly says he has his own style. "I have a good personal rapport with players". Bill has been coaching for 25 years. He began coaching at age 16 when he coached 12 year old boys at Prince George County's Good Luck Recreation Center. At age 18 he coached Prince George County's Duval High School team in a summer league. He also coached his two daughters and son from third grade through ninth grade.

In 2010 Coach Napalitano and his Assistant Coaches Lawrence Nardolillo and Michael Neal took their 17U team to the Maryland District DI Championships and after defeating the Baltimore Stars 57-55, walked away state champs. To prepare for the Nationals, HCYP entered seven tournaments in South Carolina, Virginia, Pittsburgh and Maryland. They won all seven.

The team, Kerry Bethea, Nick Doolin, Benjamin Jordon, Shane Kellaher, Joseph Kiely, Jordon Knisley, Ryan McTavish, Daniel Nardolillo, Zachary Neal, Tadas Palkainiskis, Varun Ram, Alexander Standrowicz, Joseph Stefan, Greg Whittington and Kevin Yu, traveled to Orlando, Florida's ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex to begin pool play in the National Tournament. Coming out of the pool undefeated, the team drew the Carolina Raptors in its first game in the bracket. In 2009, HCYP lost to the Raptors in overtime. The 2010 Raptors had four players that went on to play at SEC schools. They were loaded. In the 2010 contest, HCYP was fighting a thirteen point deficit. The team put on a press that closed the gap and brought them a two point victory. HCYP moved through the quarter final bracket undefeated with notable wins over teams like the New York Gauchos and the Old Gold/Dream Team. HCYP moved into the final four where they were handed their first defeat at the hands of South Carolina's Carolina Ravens 78-66. HCYP defeated CBC of Connecticut 69-67 for third place. This is likely the last AAU competition these guys will ever play. "With more than half the team holding a 3.8 or above academic average, the kids are more interested in getting a good education and basketball may be the ticket into a good school," says Coach Napalitano. "Two or three of my players may play Division I, most may play Division II and some may play DIII."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Twenty four year old Christopher Vernon Bryant Gaines was taught the game of basketball by his father John. John Gaines coached high school boy's basketball at Walbrook and Patterson High Schools before coaching girl's basketball at Coppin State University. He later coached girl's basketball at Baltimore City Community where he captured two conference championships. Christopher, however, couldn't effectively grasp the game under his father's tutelage. "I needed a different voice", says Christopher. "To everyone else my father was an important person. To me he was just my father. I needed a different voice." At age 12 John introduced Christopher to Mt. Royal coach Darrell Corbett. In his first year with Coach Corbett, Christopher's team traveled to Memphis, Tennessee to participate in the AAU National Tournament. "The trip provided me my first experience of getting out of Baltimore and the opportunity to see other styles of basketball," indicates Christopher.

Christopher attended Polytechnic High School where he lettered in football, baseball and basketball for three years. After graduation in 2006, Christopher entered Morgan State University where he majored in Industrial Engineering. That same year Christopher returned to the Mt. Royal Recreation Center where he began working part-time as a Recreation Assistant. He also became assistant coach of the 14U boy's team under Coach Craig Smith. When asked why he returned to Mt. Royal, Christopher stated, "I grew-up in the Mt. Royal program. Mt. Royal is a family oriented program, which caused me and other players to return to Mt. Royal. Coach Corbett has always been a good role model and he has always been concerned about my well being. Additionally, Coach Smith has been like a big brother."

In September 2009 Christopher's father John passed away. "My father's passing made me recall what he taught me. No matter where we went someone always knew and spoke highly of him. I evaluated the steps I was taking in life. I reflected on the lessons that my father tried teaching me as a kid. I began patterning my values in life after those taught to me by my father" Christopher indicated.



Christopher will graduate Morgan State University in fall 2010. He has applied to the Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where he interned as a Biomedical Engineer, for a position as a Systems Engineer.

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